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Jimi Hendrix

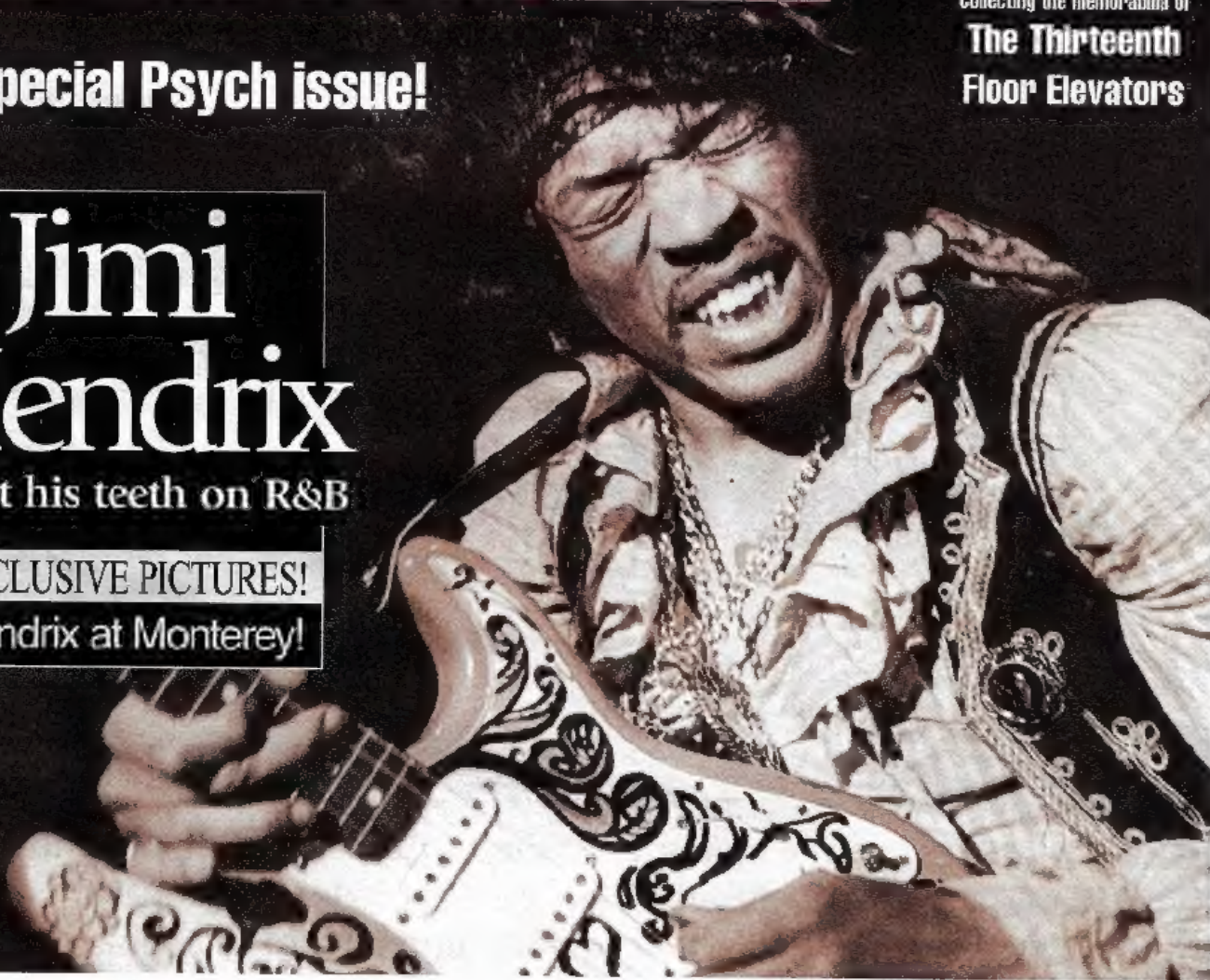
He cut his teeth on R&B

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Jimi Hendrix

The R&B years — 1962-66

by Steven Roby

To fully appreciate Jimi Hendrix's reverberating wall of sound, one must look back to his musical R&B roots. His influences were more defined by The Memphis Sound than by Detroit's Motown Sound that characterized black popular music in the 1960s. Hendrix hated Motown's style so much that he called it "synthetic soul" that was "very artificial and commercial." His driving rhythm guitar, with the occasional solo that stepped over the line, is heard on early 45s with Lonnie Youngblood, King Curtis and others. This style carried over into his years with The Jimi Hendrix Experience.

The young James Marshall Hendrix had grand aspirations of becoming a guitar player. Influenced by his father's great collection of blues records, Jimmy would strum on the nearest household item, keeping time with the music. In Seattle's Garfield High School, he joined The Rocking Kings, who covered early R&B crossover hits by The Coasters and others. But the other players drowned out his acoustic guitar, so he realized he needed to go electric.

Hendrix would have continued playing in various high-school bands, but he decided to march down to the Army Recruitment Center after two run-ins with the law for joyriding and pressure from his father. After 13 months in the 101st Airborne Division, Hendrix was injured on a jump that resulted in a broken ankle and back problems, and in a short while his discharge came through. Standing at the gates of Fort Campbell, Ky., with a duffle bag and \$300 in his pocket, he was ready to resume his musical career.

The King Kasuals

In the Army, Hendrix befriended Billy Cox, a bass player who was always eager to jam. They performed on weekends as The Casuals at various clubs on the base or nearby in Clarksville, Tenn., at The Pink Poodle. When visiting Nashville, they became familiar with its growing R&B scene, where, in addition to the 20 or so Black nightclubs, there was also WLAC, a popular 50,000-watt R&B radio station. WLAC could be heard anywhere from West Virginia to Los Angeles, attracting many musicians to come see what all the excitement was in "Music City."

When Cox was discharged in October 1962, he and Hendrix became roommates in Clarksville. A successful audition at the Del Morocco Club opened the door for a steady gig, but it later proved to be a learning experience for these young musicians.



Photos courtesy of the David Peary collection, www.jimihendrixonline.com

Jimi Hendrix with The King Kasuals at The Jolly Roger in Nashville, spring 1962. Inset right: From left are Jimi Hendrix, Billy Cox, and Leonard Moses. Above: The King Kasuals included Jimi Hendrix, guitar; Billy Cox, bass; Harold Nesbit, drums; Leonard Moses, guitar; Buford Majors, sax; and Harry Bachelor, vocals. The band reportedly got fired often from gigs for playing too loud.



"We got in with a club owner, who seemed to like us a lot," Hendrix recalled. "He bought us some new gear. I had a Silverstone amp, and the others got Fender Band Masters. But this guy took our money, and he was sort of holding us back."

"The promoters were the strangest and the most crooked there [in Nashville]. They used to come right up on to this makeshift stage while we were in the middle of a number, slip money in our pockets and disappear. Then we'd find out afterwards they'd only slipped us a couple of dollars instead of \$10 or \$15."

With money running out fast, Hendrix and Cox piled into Cox's beat-up '55 Plymouth (which wouldn't go into reverse) and set off for Indianapolis for a battle of the bands. However, with their impulsive scheme, they would have to find other willing musicians, and if they didn't win first prize (\$100), they'd be even deeper in the hole.

After a few days in a hotel, awaiting the competition, money nearly ran out and they moved into Cox's Plymouth. They jumped at a promising offer to play with the house band at the Brass Rail Tavern, which never panned out. To make matters worse, the car wouldn't start, and their last hope of raising some cash was to win the competition. They somehow managed to survive the next couple of days on chili and all the free crackers they could stuff into a bowl.

One of the most popular R&B bands in



Courtesy of Michael Ochs Archives.com

Jimi Hendrix with Curtis Knight & The Squires, promo pic, 1964.

Indianapolis at the time was part of the upcoming competition: The Presidents. They had a loyal following and high hope for a demo they recorded at the fledgling Motown studio. Alphonso Young, guitarist with The Presidents, recalled his first encounter with Hendrix and Cox: "One Saturday afternoon — it was a matinee — The Presidents were on stage playing at George's Bar, and two guys came in. One played bass and the other guitar. One was short and witty-like and the other was tall. It happened to be Jimi Hendrix and Billy Cox."

After The Presidents finished slaying the crowd with one of their sweltering 45-minute sets, the newcomers approached them to ask if they would be their backup band. At first the band laughed, then slyly nodded to each other, thinking they'd have some fun with the out-of-towners. Hendrix asked if they knew "Soldier Boy," a solid #1 hit by The Shirelles in 1962, and he began to play it in his own unique style.

"He started off that song like I've never seen anyone play before," recalled Young, but The Presidents never did back them up. As expected, The Presidents won. But before leaving, Hendrix told Young to look him up if he was ever in Clarksville.

Out of gas and money, Hendrix and Cox were eventually rescued by their girlfriends and made it back to Tennessee. Several weeks later, Young grabbed a Greyhound bus, taking Hendrix up on his offer. The three musicians

Jimi Hendrix Book Review

JIMI HENDRIX AND THE MAKING OF ARE YOU EXPERIENCED

by Sean Egan

A Cappella (Softcover, 212 pages, \$14.95)

With penetrating detail, author Sean Egan (who penned The Animals bio *Animal Tracks*) offers with *Jimi Hendrix And The Making Of Are You Experienced* an enlightening in-depth look at the creation of Jimi Hendrix's landmark 1967 debut.

Drawing on new first-person interviews Egan conducted with Hendrix's musical colleagues and friends, including Jimi Hendrix Experience bassist Noel Redding and Hendrix's girlfriend Kathy Etchingham, the author reveals the astonishing creativity behind what he calls "one of the greatest albums ever made."

Surprisingly, the short sessions that produced the Experience's debut (recorded between gigs, yet) were characterized by seemingly effortless bursts of creativity. Only "Hey Joe" was rehearsed or played live before it was recorded. Hendrix presented the rest of his songs to The Experience only on the day of the recording session where, writes Egan, "every basic track of

those sessions. The whirlwind completion in just one day of "51st Anniversary" is a clear indication of a band who, writes Egan, "was simply on fire creatively." Further, the author's descriptions of various basic track outtakes reveal the way a particular song took shape, i.e., "I Don't Live Today's" four previous takes, notes the author, prove that "the weird and wonderful sounds and effects to be heard on the master version are not particularly dependent on overdubs at all."

Not everyone was overwhelmed with the finished product, however. Engineer George Chkiantz objected to producer Chas Chandler's tendency to rush the sessions to keep the bills from piling up, which he believes led to a tendency to go "with the first thing that would pass," resulting in songs he now views as "flawed diamonds."

In addition to the recording sessions themselves, Hendrix's personal odyssey is covered, from his early days as sideman for established acts in the U.S. to his triumphant reception in London and his final days in personal and artistic decline beset by drugs and hangers-on and surrounded, says ex-girlfriend Linda Keith, by "dreadful, dreadful people."

In Egan's view Hendrix never came close to matching the brilliance of his recordings with the Experience, pointing out the "boring" guitar solos that marked his final recordings. Yet the praise for *Are You Experienced* upon its initial release was hardly unanimous. A chapter devoted to critical reactions to the album includes a pan from Rolling Stone which noted the "poor quality of the songs and the inanity of the lyrics" (1). Meanwhile *Melody Maker* waxed enthusiastic about "extremely atmospheric, organic sounds which have an uncanny knack of circling through your mind and blowing the top of your head off."

But perhaps it is rock critic Charles Shaar Murray who sums it up best, telling the author that 35 years after its release, *Are You Experienced* represented "the drastic expansion of the sonic palette" and was in essence "a wake-up call for the 'collective imagination.'"

— Tierney Smith



Surprisingly, the short sessions that produced the [Jimi Hendrix] Experience's debut (recorded between gigs, yet) were characterized by seemingly effortless bursts of creativity. Only "Hey Joe" was rehearsed or played live before it was recorded.

each song was perfected in one session." (Though for his part, Redding attributes the band's rejection of rehearsals to their being "a lazy load of gigs.")

In addition, Egan points out the "group's extraordinary capacity to learn a song inside-out by the time they'd gone through a couple of run-throughs," Hendrix's "understanding of sonics and technology beyond even his highly talented contemporaries" and his penchant for experimenting with new gadgets to create groundbreaking sounds. The author also lauds the importance of drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Redding's contributions to the brilliance of those recordings, citing the "unimaginative, even drab" performances Hendrix turned in during his post-Experience years.

Throughout the book Egan delves deeply into the source of inspiration behind these songs, such as the "furious argument" Hendrix had with Etchingham, which partly inspired one of his most beautiful songs, "The Wind Cries Mary," and emphasizes the brisk pace that characterized

Jimi Hendrix CD and DVD Reviews

JIMI HENDRIX

Blue Wild Angel: Jimi Hendrix Live At The Isle Of Wight
MCA (088 113 086-2) (Two CDs)

His Isle Of Wight set has a reputation, a lore maybe, as one of Jimi Hendrix's legendary live performances. However, the myth certainly seems more amenable than the reality of any such claim, provided a thorough listen of the two-disc set *Blue Wild Angel: Jimi Hendrix Live At The Isle Of Wight*.

The musical legend, it seems, comes more from the setting, the situation and the history inherent in what was Hendrix's last show

on British soil, in the middle of the night, to an audience he couldn't even see, to a people who had largely, if not made him his start, provided his first sizable audience.

He honors them with a ramshackle "God Save The Queen" as his opener, segues into another British anthem of sorts, "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," and immediately the mistakes are obvious — a constantly shifting tonal center, slack accompaniment and Hendrix blindingly electric one moment, ordinary the next.

Still, this is a show that makes strengths out of its imperfections, a weak-kneed boast perhaps but still a brave soldiering on. "Machine Gun" pales in comparison to its more famous Band Of Gypsies counterpart, but "Red House" possesses a solemnity — gone is the self-deprecating humor Hendrix would often wrest from the song — and instead we have what might be the guitarist's defining blues performance.

With drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Billy Cox respectively plodding and plunking along, Hendrix locks into his own powerful groove, suggesting phrases, playing others outright, turning the silence between the sounds and the notes themselves into a kind of counterpoint of blues myth and blues reality. The longer numbers work best. "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," with its portentous opening verse that would soon take on literal meaning, is, even with its guitar pyrotechnics, chilling. It reminds me of Jon King in Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* — the last man in the castle having a go at his own vaunting legacy as a final, worthy leaving-taking.

— Colin Fleming

Blue Wild Angel: Jimi Hendrix Live At The Isle Of Wight
MCA (088 170 341-9) (DVD)

Principally a concert film of Jimi Hendrix's set at the 1970 Isle Of Wight Festival, his last British date. *Blue Wild Angel* begins, not with the show itself, but with material gathered from several sources. We see Hendrix with Dick Cavett, at Berkeley, and at Woodstock, each image and bit of narration presumably a primer for viewing and understanding what happened at the Isle Of Wight. Hendrix apparently didn't want to go, instead preferring to remain in New York and work on his studio



creations. I am not sure if one is supposed to be more impressed with Hendrix's Isle Of Wight performance than without it. If we discount the fantastically amusing aging hippie with her bit about "fun, youth, beautiful, all are welcome" at the festival's outset, the first genuine imparting of anything that might relate to Hendrix that

doesn't seem somewhat contrived occurs as we watch him make his way from his dressing room to the stage. In a long, traveling shot, director Murray Close moves his camera when Hendrix moves, stops it when he stops, becoming blocked behind a pole, a stack of cases, then continuing on to the other side. Hendrix walks as if dazed while The Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" plays over the backstage speakers. A young, attractive French reporter sidles up to him, asks a truly vapid question and receives an answer voiced like she isn't even there. Then Hendrix, sounding more like himself, responds to the woman again, properly, closely, in a soft voice, as if she were a confidante. A crude swish-pan and we are transported directly behind the stage where a disheveled Hendrix asks a stagehand how "God Saves The Queen" goes. The stagehand hums the opening, and apparently this is enough.

From a filmmaking perspective, *Blue Wild Angel* is typical of its genre. There are match cuts between several camera angles, a prevailing stasis within most shots and a few "quirks" some might find slightly annoying — four thin, blue lines run the length of the frame of the chief camera angle on Hendrix's right for the first third of the film, and scratches in the film's surface are later visible on the screen. But *Blue Wild Angel* is exemplary in conveying Hendrix's command, which is evident throughout. On a festival bill with two acts — in Miles Davis and The Who — surpassing his own artistry, Hendrix remains both consummate as a professional and unpredictable as an artist, inviting our attention. As Mitch Mitchell slumbers through one of his three drum solos, Hendrix mans the stage, whispering to bassist Billy Cox, walking up to the speaker cabinets to advise a soundman, then counting the band back into ensemble mode. As the set progresses, the cutting accelerates, showmanship and montage as a race to the finish line. Hendrix would be dead within three weeks, and this is a feverish performance. "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" transitions into the closing "In From The Storm," and a blue arc light, persistently bright on the stage's far side, is like talisman and harbinger both, dreadfully fitting.

— Colin Fleming

"One night I heard this screamin' and hollerin', and they were screamin' and hollerin' for [Jimi Hendrix]! I thought they were screamin' for me. But he was back there playin' the guitar with his mouth. He didn't do that again, 'cause we made sure the lights didn't come on that area no more. We fixed that!"

— Little Richard

decided to re-form The Casuals, using Young's suggestion to add "King" to the name and changing the spelling to Kasuals. The band added Harry Bachelor on vocals, T. Howard Williams on sax, and Freeman Brown on drums. They even had a fan club known as The Buttons, due to the fact that Hendrix often lost his shirt buttons during his wild stage antics.

The band worked what was then called the "Chitlin' Circuit," a series of Southern black music clubs that held only about 50 people and usually had a pot-bellied stove serving fish and chitlins. The King Kasuals' set list included popular cover songs such as "Green Onions," "Polka Dots," "Bright Lights, Big City," "What'd I Say?" and "Johnny B. Goode." To make their stage act more outrageous, Cox made Hendrix a 100-foot guitar cord that enabled him to do flips from the stage and other strange tricks, but there were some setbacks.

"At a length of 80 feet we lost 1/1000 of a second, causing an unwanted echo," Cox remembered. "At 70 feet it still echoed. Finally at 55 it didn't echo, but it wouldn't let him get out the door [of the club]. It took him to the door. I was hoping he could go all the way out the door. The electronics of those days were still primitive."

Still, Hendrix developed his showmanship by playing the guitar and picking it with his teeth, a talent he learned from Young. The girls in the audience loved it too.

Unfortunately, The King Kasuals never entered a recording studio. Cox, however, did bring Hendrix down to Nashville's Starday/King studio in 1963. Producer Hoss Allen wasn't ready for the wild playing and feedback that came through the studio monitors, and he decided to cut out Hendrix's track. Nashville's legendary blues guitarist Johnny Jones says that Allen also used Hendrix on one of his sessions for a song titled, "Feels So Bad. Like A Ball Game On A Rainy Day," but the track still hasn't surfaced.

Hendrix left The King Kasuals in the fall of 1963 for club dates with R&B singer Marion James. In an article for Nashville's *Shake* magazine, James stated that it's probably Hendrix on her first Top 10 record, "That's My Man" (Excello 45-2280).

"He was keen on doing road gigs when he first joined with me," James recalled. Cox and many others felt that Hendrix was yearning at this time for his true destiny as a professional entertainer.

Not content with being in one place for any length of time, Hendrix eventually decided to leave the Nashville scene when a concert promoter approached him about going out on the

road with a Top 40 R&B hit-parade package.

"I went out on this tour with B.B. King, Jackie Wilson, Sam Cooke, Chuck Jackson and all of these people," Hendrix recalled, "playin' guitar behind a lot of the acts on the tour. I started travelin' around and went up to New York and won first place in The Apollo amateur contest, \$25. So I stayed up there, starved for about two to three weeks, and then The Isley Brothers asked if I would like to play with them."

1964-1965

Hendrix (now calling himself Maurice James) began his apprenticeship as the lead guitarist with The Isley Brothers in March 1964, while keeping open his options to work with other R&B acts. After passing his audition, he recorded the single "Testify (Parts 1 & 2)" (T-Neck 45-501) with the Isleys at New York's Atlantic studios.

During a brief hiatus in May, Hendrix slipped away for a session with R&B singer Don Covay, an up-and-coming singer/songwriter. Covay had gone around to various nightclubs in Harlem looking for session players for songs he hoped to sell to Atlantic Records. The result was Covay's first major hit, "Mercy, Mercy," which climbed to #35 on *Billboard's* Pop chart. At age 21, Hendrix was proud of this accomplishment and showed the Booker T. And The MG's guitarist Steve Cropper how he played it. Cropper was influenced to play it on his group's *Soul Dressing* LP in November of the following year.

Two more recording sessions with Hendrix and The Isley Brothers took place Aug. 5 and Sept. 23, before they set off on a 35-day tour. Hendrix left The Isley Brothers in late 1964 for yet another R&B package tour. After being stranded in Kansas, he eventually made it to Atlanta, Ga., where he met Little Richard and started playing with his backing band, The Upsetters.

Little Richard wasn't especially pleased with Hendrix's theatrics, as he recalled: "One night I heard this screamin' and hollerin', and they were screamin' and hollerin' for him! I thought they were screamin' for me. But he was back there playin' the guitar with his mouth. He didn't do that again, 'cause we made sure the lights didn't come on that area no more. We fixed that!"

In defiance, Hendrix pulled out of Richard's tour for a while and, while in Los Angeles, cut a single called "My Diary" with R&B singer Rosa Lee Brooks. The single received only local airplay, and Hendrix decid-

ed to rejoin Little Richard's tour in April 1965.

According to Robert Perminian, Little Richard's brother and tour manager, Hendrix was fired shortly after playing The Apollo Theater in New York for missing the tour bus headed to Washington, D.C. Hendrix's version of the termination differed. In a letter to his father, he said that he quit because Little Richard hadn't paid him for five and a half weeks, "and you can't live on promises when you're on the road."

Hendrix wrote that he visited a few record companies and they seemed interested in using his talents; however, he was not happy that he hadn't made a big name for himself and still had to play behind other people. He also noted that you didn't have to be a good singer, just as long as your single had a good beat. He said he thought that in a short while he'd have a hit song and the money would start rolling in.

Mr. Wiggles

Mr. Wiggles was born Alexander Randolph in 1937 in Richmond, Va. He began singing in the late 1950s and then started touring with various R&B revues. He also had a knack for merchandising and often sold photos of B.B. King or Bobby Blue Bland glued onto a hat for \$3 on a 50¢ investment. He took his merchandising money and later financed several recording sessions at Cameo-Parkway Studios in New York.

At this time, Hendrix was struggling in Harlem, and Wiggles offered him his home and a series of recording sessions. Over the course of three months, Wiggles used Hendrix on several singles that were pressed on the Golden Triangle label. Unfortunately, Wiggles was unsuccessful in getting major airplay or influencing the R&B charts. The only large station that played Wiggles' song "Wash My Back" (GT 100B) was WLAC in Nashville.

According to sax player Grady Gaines, he and The Upsetters had the opportunity to record with Wiggles during the summer of 1965. Little Richard may have temporarily left The Upsetters around this time to headline a series of sold-out concerts in London set up by The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein. According to *The Life And Times Of Little Richard* by Charles White, Richard objected to his band playing at clubs on their own on off nights — "so that they could be heard as individuals."

Wiggles said that the songs he used Hendrix on are "Fat Back," "Wash My Back," "Ride Paul Revere," "Home Boy," "I-Model Ford," "You Upset My Mind," "Fat Back (Instrumental)," "Cabbage Green" (The Upsetters), "Divided We Stand" and "Double 00 Soul." Several other artists recorded for Wiggles and featured Hendrix: Little Tommy, "Baby, Can't You See"; Lulu Howard, "She Took My Man"; Sebastian Williams, "Too Much"; and The Wigglin' Men, "Wigglin' Part 2." Wiggles sells these CDs on his Internet site, located at <http://hoodedmonk.com/moon/SoundofSoul.htm> under the titles *Mr. Wiggles Again* and *Mr. Wiggles & His Sound Of Soul Family*. Unfortunately, neither Wiggles nor his CDs offer any session-player or track-date info.

"We started on Cameo-Parkway and then went to Herb Abramson's studio, A.I." Wiggles recalled. "We finished 'Home Boy' at A.I. Some

(Please see Hendrix page 34)

How Lonnie got his groove back

Goldmine's interview with Lonnie Youngblood

by Steven Roby

At 62, sax player Lonnie Youngblood is a busy man, performing traditional gospel and jazz tunes at various functions four to five nights a week. But his real love is blues and R&B. In the mid-1960s, he and Jimi Hendrix performed and recorded together and formed a close friendship that lasted after Hendrix gained worldwide recognition and tried to leave his R&B roots behind.

Youngblood's early sessions with Hendrix were exploited without his approval countless times since Hendrix's death in 1970, and now, 33 years later, these master recordings have been returned to him. His recently released CD on the Empire Musicworks label includes his Fairmont singles and one previously unreleased studio track with Hendrix from 1969.



Courtesy of Empire Musicworks

Lonnie Youngblood

Goldmine: When did you first meet Jimi Hendrix?

Lonnie Youngblood: I was discharged from the Army in January 1966. Maybe about two weeks after I had been home, Curtis Knight called me because he was looking for a saxophone player. He invited me to come down and hear his band The Squires rehearse. This was the first time I had ever heard or saw Jimi, or Jimi James, as he was known at that time. I joined Curtis' band and started playing gigs all around New York. Jimi and I became very good friends. We were both house-rockers!

Curtis started to lose interest in the band, and at the same time I had a couple of job offers to be a bandleader. I knew I didn't want to play in his band forever, so I told Jimi and a couple of the guys in the band about it and they said, "Let's go!" From there, we started playing a few gigs as The Blood Brothers. I was an enterprising guy and wanted to cut me some records.

How did you finally get your tapes back after so many years?

I can't tell you that right now but these are the original masters, and Empire has done a wonderful job remastering them. They sound new to me.

At what point did Hendrix break away from playing R&B?

After we had done some recordings, Jimi told me he was going down to the Village and do some trippin' out. He went out one night with some kids, and came back and asked me if I had ever experienced a tab. I didn't know what the hell he was talking about. From that time on, he had a couple of encounters with that acid thing. It was different for me because I was married, had a son, a car and bills.

He started bringing back different songs and asked me if I liked them. I told him it wasn't my cup of tea, but it was cool. He went off to London, but I didn't know he was gone. My bass player called me up and told me [Hendrix] had a #1 record on the charts. I was blown away.

When did you see him next?

By 1969, I was back up in Harlem working at Sonall's Paradise, and who walks in with that shy and sneaky smile like nobody else had — Jimi! Everybody started turning around looking at what he was wearing. He had his guitar with him and we played some R&B and blues. After that, we went down to The Record Plant and stayed there for a week recording.

Isn't that where this track "Mother, Mother" on your new CD comes from? Who are the other musicians?

Yes. Hank Anderson is on bass, John Winfield is on organ, Jimmy Mayes is on drums, Jimi's on guitar, and I'm doing vocals.

I've heard you speak about another track called "Georgia Blue."

That's just another name for "Mother, Mother." I've copyrighted them under both titles.

Are there more tracks like this from The Record Plant sessions that could be released?

They need to be found and let me get it because I'm the composer. We were creating right there as we went along. Jimi mentioned how we would get a record deal from these sessions. I think he was helping me get on with my own style and groove. He didn't try to take me where he was at. He knew I wasn't there.

Lonnie Youngblood CD Review

Lonnie Youngblood featuring Jimi Hendrix
Two Great Experiences
Empire Musicworks (80269-39063-2) (Expanded Edition)

After 32 years of altered and edited recordings, Jimi Hendrix fans finally have the complete and original Lonnie Youngblood/Jimi Hendrix tracks on one CD. Youngblood claims that back in 1971 the original tapes were stolen and sold to companies that earned millions of dollars cashing in on Hendrix's name. (The original LP, *Two Great Experiences* Together, reportedly sold more than five million copies.)

Two Great Experiences opens up with the previously unreleased "Mother, Mother," a great blues number from the 1969 Record Plant sessions. The rest of the CD's 17 tracks are filled with material from the 1966 Abtome Studio sessions, both original and new mixes.

While the sound is crisp, the mix is generally geared toward having Hendrix's guitar and Youngblood's sax up front. Several of the tracks have the horn section mixed so low it sounds as if they were in the next studio. Others suffer from far too much echo. However, one of the best from this batch is "Wipe The Sweat (Take 3)" where Hendrix steps up to the mic and adds a decent vocal.

Hendrix historians will spot a few red flags in Gail Mitchell's liner notes. These are not "Hendrix's first sessions as a soloist," nor are they from 1965 (Hendrix was with Little Richard at that time). There are also three songs by other artists that are not credited on this release — "(My Girl) She's A Fox" by The Icecreams, "Sweet Thang" by Billy Lamont, and "That Little Old Groovemaker" by Jimmy Norman.

Youngblood offered this explanation when I interviewed him: "I cut these tracks and then let other people who were trying to get a demo put vocals on them. That's why they ended up with my collection of songs." Except for the new mix, "Groovemaker" sounds almost identical to Norman's original 45 on the Samar label, yet Youngblood said he never recorded with Norman.

Two Great Experiences is an excellent example of Hendrix's early hard-driving R&B work. One can only hope that more material from their 1969 collaboration is released too.

— Steven Roby





Courtesy of Niko Enner, www.earlyhendrix.com

Two early obscure singles (and their flip sides), featuring Jimi Hendrix on guitar, from 1966.

Hendrix from page 17)

of the players on these sessions were Grady Gaines and Gene Burke. I did a lot for Jimi — all the crushed-velvet clothes you've seen him wear came from me. Jimi wanted to be an entertainer while I wanted to also be involved with the business side. We also did another song called "Chewin' the Fat."

"Chewin' the Fat" will be released in 2003 on a CD titled *Mr. Wiggles' Classic Soul*. Wiggles said he is also working on a book about his time with Hendrix.

"Jimi carried everything he belonged in a little sack, with his drawers and maybe a shirt and some toiletries. In an actual drawstring sack, and he carried his guitar in another damn sack. He was free to do anything he wanted to do."

— Lonnie Youngblood

Lonnie Youngblood

In January 1966, saxman/vocalist Lonnie Youngblood was discharged from the service and was excited to re-form his band. Before doing that, he joined Curtis Knight's Squires, a New York bar band that Hendrix hooked up with in late '65. Youngblood eventually splintered from The Squires and formed The Blood Brothers, bringing along Hendrix. This band included Ace Hall on bass (occasionally alternating with Hank Anderson), Vito (a.k.a. "The Lover") on drums, and Hendrix on guitar. However, Hendrix's care-free lifestyle was sometimes a little more than Youngblood could tolerate.

"Jimi carried everything he belonged in a little sack," Youngblood remembered, "with his drawers and maybe a shirt and some toiletries. In an actual drawstring sack, and he carried his guitar in another damn sack. He was free to do anything he wanted to do."

During this time, Youngblood signed a record deal with Fairmount Records, a subsidiary of Philadelphia's Cameo-Parkway

label. In June 1966, several sessions at Abtore Recording Studio in New York yielded 13 funky R&B tracks.

Drummer Bernard Purdie recalled: "I was playing for Lonnie at the time. He tried to sound like King Curtis, which was fine because he looked like King Curtis. Jimi's thing was the solo. He really liked to solo. Before he was the Jimi Hendrix as people know him, he really played rhythm and solos. He was one of the best rhythm-guitar players around, and when you needed a solo, nobody could top him."

Hendrix also did session work at this time for R&B singers The Icemen, Billy Lamont, and Jimmy Norman. Unfortunately over the years many of these songs have been edited, overdubbed and mislabeled and are sometimes coupled with a fake, Hendrix-like guitar player. These tracks have appeared on numerous releases without any clarification:

"Go-Go Shoes" b/w "Go-Go Place" (Fairmount 1003) by Lonnie Youngblood. Much confusion surrounds the date on this single, which states

1963. According to a Fairmount Records discography Web site, the label released its first title in March 1963 and was defunct by January 1965, but Youngblood emphatically states that this single with Hendrix was released in the summer of 1966. Lyric references to miniskirts and The Boogaloo support his claim, since they didn't become popular until 1965.

"Soul Food (That's A What I Like)" b/w "Goodbye Bessie Mae" (Fairmount 1022) by Lonnie Youngblood. This single also shows 1963 printed on its label, but this is also incorrect. Youngblood's second single (Fairmount 1016) features a cover of Sam The Sham And The Pharaohs' "Wooly Bully," which was originally released in March 1965. According to a U.S. record guide, "Soul Food" wasn't released until 1967.

"Sweet Thing" b/w "Please Don't Leave" (20th Century-Fox Records 45-6707) by Billy Lamont. Jimmy Norman explained: "Billy Lamont and The Icemen were all on the same label, and we had the same producer, Johnny Brantley. Samar was Johnny Brantley's label. He

Legal voodoo: Hendrix family court battles continue

SEATTLE, WASH. — Jimi Hendrix's estate is suffering yet another round of legal headaches. Fans may recall that after his death two former girlfriends claimed that they'd had his child and were due a share of the guitarist's accumulated wealth. Next, a former record producer, with whom Hendrix signed a three-year \$1 contract in 1965, continues to legally challenge Experience Hendrix, the company that controls Hendrix's music and image. And now, three Hendrix family members are poised to slug it out in court.

After Jimi's father Al died last April, his brother Leon filed suit against his stepsister Janie (adopted by Al in 1968), the CEO of Experience Hendrix, contesting the validity of Al's will, believed to be worth more than \$100 million. The filing contends that Al wasn't competent when he signed a trust agreement in 1998, making Janie his primary heir and essentially disowning Leon. Leon's inheritance was one gold Jimi Hendrix record from Al's collection, chosen by Janie. The lawsuit refers to Al as "functionally illiterate," a simple man with a drinking problem who was easily led. The suit alleges that Janie campaigned to persuade a sick old man to disown his biological son.

Leon then filed a separate lawsuit against Janie for defamation of character, claiming that she circulated allegations of his illegitimacy to block his inheritance. He has also taken exception to Janie's use of the term "the Hendrix family."

Leon told *Seattle Weekly*, "My point has simply been that Janie is not a blood relation of Jimi Hendrix, and that by presenting herself as one, she is misleading the public. In fact, Janie and her company do not represent most of the Hendrix family. They represent only Janie's blood relations and one Hendrix cousin. The majority of the family—including everyone on Jimi and my mother's side—is, like me, estranged from Janie."

In a press release posted on www.jimi-hendrix.com, Experience Hendrix responded: "The suits appear to be the latest attempt of Leon to capitalize on Jimi's fame and lega-

cy, and are based upon allegations which falsely depict both Al Hendrix and Janie Hendrix. The pleadings reflect the sad story of a man who has made many bad choices in his life, is unhappy with the natural consequences of those choices and continues to lay the blame at the feet of others. The management of Experience Hendrix is confident that truth will prevail and the claims will be rejected in these legal proceedings."

Al's living trust also mentioned three other Hendrix children (Joseph, Cathy, and Pamela) who were born to his first wife Lucille, but no provisions were made for them. So far, only Joseph has filed a creditor's claim against Al's estate.

Janie and Leon also held separate tributes last November for what would have been Jimi's 60th birthday. Bassist Billy Cox and drummer Buddy Miles, from the original Band Of Gypsys, played at Janie's bash in Seattle, while in Los Angeles, former Experience bassist Noel Redding jammed at Leon's tribute to his brother.

Currently, both Janie and Leon are back in the news with new endeavors. Leon has formed the nonprofit James Marshall Hendrix Foundation to preserve and promote the musical art and heritage of Jimi Hendrix and is financially helping a Seattle nursing home, just blocks from where they grew up.

Janie, on the other hand, is reviving construction plans for a Hendrix memorial at Greenwood Memorial Park in Renton, Wash. The project was put on hold for the past five years when true fans learned the plan included selling public and corporate sponsorships to complete the project and moving Jimi's remains. The headstone was recently removed and a simple grave marker has been put in its place.

Craig Diellenbach, a developer and former business manager for Leon, is bankrolling his legal fight. Their attorney, Lance Looney, said the trial to contest Al's trust will go to court this October and the defamation suit should occur in February 2004.

— Steven Roby

was the guy I signed with when I moved to New York. He was a producer that had several artists like The Icemen, Billy Lamont, and me. He would always come up with good money to go into the studio and do sessions. A few of these singles with Hendrix on them made a little noise, but there were no real big hits. Brantley was always consistent and would always have something out on the market."

"(My Girl) She's A Fox" b/w "(I Wonder) What It Takes" (Samar 5111) by The Icemen. This is another single featuring Hendrix on guitar that was arranged by Youngblood and released in 1966.

"You're Only Hurting Yourself" b/w "That Little Old Groovemaker" (Samar 5-112) by Jimmy Norman. Johnny Brantley produced this single with Hendrix on guitar that was released in 1966. Jimmy Norman explained: "Besides Hendrix on guitar we used The Icemen [Gino Armstrong and James Stokes] and a girl group called The Thrills as background singers. Hendrix also played on some other tracks not produced by Johnny Brantley. I can't remember them all. One of them was called 'On You Girlie That Looks Good.' I wrote that one with Otis Blackwell. It was never released.... I think he also did 'Miracle Worker' with me, and if I'm not mistaken, 'Family Tree.'"

The original mixes for The Icemen and Norman singles are available only on the Samar 45s released in 1966. Versions that appear on later compilations, titled either "Groovemaker," "Groove" or "Two In One Goes," are all drastically different. Another Norman single, "Gangster Of Love," which is often featured on many Hendrix compilations, actually has no Hendrix involvement. Youngblood has recently stated that he has an unreleased track with Hendrix called "Georgia Blue," and he plans to sell it.

King Curtis

In addition to playing with Youngblood, Hendrix also recorded and later toured with legendary R&B sax player King Curtis in 1966. Cornell Dupree, a rhythm guitarist for Curtis, said that Curtis had hired Hendrix because he wanted to update his band's sound, and the fact that Hendrix could play some Albert King, greased and funky, was a big plus. Bernard Purdie added that he liked the way Hendrix played because he was left-handed. "One of the things that impressed him more than anything was the way Hendrix played real blues."

"King Curtis also loved to play the blues and was a serious guitar player. Very few people knew that Curtis was a frustrated guitar player. He mastered the horn, but he loved to play the blues on guitar. This is why guitarist Billy Butler was one of the people Curtis had put with Hendrix. Putting the two of them together was like dynamite. It was on a King Curtis session for Atlantic with Billy Butler and Hendrix. They were both quite together a bit because they were both doing things live for King Curtis at Small's Paradise in New York."

Eventually Hendrix broke free of playing behind R&B headliners and formed his own band, Jimi James And The Blue Flames. Some say he experimented with LSD at this time and grew friendly with the people and musicians of Greenwich Village. Folksinger Ellen McIlwaine encountered Hendrix while play-

ing at the Café Au Go Go.

"He came up to me one time and asked, 'Can I play on your set?' and I said, 'Sure you can!' He'd play electric guitar and I'd play piano. Sometimes Richie Havens would play drums. Harvey Brooks was always on bass. The picture I have in my head is I was sitting at the piano and Jimi was leaning over on the barstool. He was not the personality you'd see with the John Hammond act, like squirting toothpaste into the audience and fooling around like that. Jimi didn't do any of that when we played together. He played very quietly and

seriously. I always played boogie-woogie piano and a couple of ballads. It was kind of bluesy."

In August, Chas Chandler, former bassist for The Animals, heard Hendrix playing in a small Village nightclub and immediately put together an offer. McIlwaine recalled, "Jimi told me that Chandler only wanted him, and they didn't want the rest of The Blue Flames. Jimi felt guilty, but he was going through with it. 'I don't feel too good about it,' he said, 'but I think I'll do it.' He was flippant, but he was always very measured."

However, Hendrix did contact his friend

Cox about joining this new band. "He called me and said, 'There's a guy that wants to take me to England and make me a star,'" Cox recalled, "and I told him about you." I told Jimi I couldn't come because I had fallen on bad times; I had only three strings on my bass, and I'm renting an amplifier. I was poor. He told me he'd make it and send for me, and that's just what he did."

Steven Roby is the author of *Black Gold: The Lost Archives Of Jimi Hendrix* (Billboard Books). For further on him or his book go to www.stevenrobby.com.

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The Jimi Hendrix explosion

British photographer Bruce Fleming captured the onstage excitement at the 1967 Monterey Pop Fest with these exclusive photos

by Spencer Leigh



All photos © Bruce Fleming

"Jimi Hendrix was wearing a cloak, and so I got an idea for a Dracula feel," said photographer Bruce Fleming. "I told him to hold it open and it would look as though the boys were coming out from underneath. We got the lighting right and it was the cover for his first album, *Are You Experienced?*"

Almost every '60s music fan will have an example of Fleming's photography in his or her collection. He has photographed the rough guys (Eric Burdon) and the pretty boys (Dave Clark) and produced some stunning work.

"There's no way I could have prettied Eric Burdon up," he reflected. "His manager wanted something explosive, so I got hold of a hand grenade and put it on a chain around his neck. He stripped to the waist and folded his arms, and that was a tough-guy image that worked very well. On the other hand, The Dave Clark Five were five good-looking lads. You could photograph them from any angle and get a good shot."

It was through Chas Chandler, The

Animals' bass player, that Fleming came to meet Hendrix.

"Chas had met Jimi in New York and saw immediately that he was amazing," Fleming told *Goldmine*. "He brought him over to England and he called me up and said, 'Come down and meet this guy. He is an amazing guitarist. I want you to do the record cover and some publicity pictures.' I met him and we got along fine. With that haircut and all, he looked terrific. My favorite shot is of him standing with his hands on his hips against a backcloth."

Did Hendrix mind having his picture taken? "No, but he was usually preoccupied. I think he was listening to music in his head," Fleming theorized. "He knew we were working on an image, and so he was happy to work with me. But if it got too silly, he didn't want to know. If there was a good idea behind it and he could see that there would be some purpose to the picture, then he was interested."

In the 1960s the album cover itself became art, notably with The Beatles' *"The Beatles"*

Above: Jimi Hendrix rockin' out at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival.
Below: The Jimi Hendrix Experience (from left): Mitch Mitchell, Jimi Hendrix, and Noel Redding.



"Jimi loved the whole thing [Monterey Pop Fest], but he did have an argument with The Who as to who was going on first. They were both into art and destruction and so I knew that there would be some fireworks on stage, but I had no idea what."

— Bruce Fleming

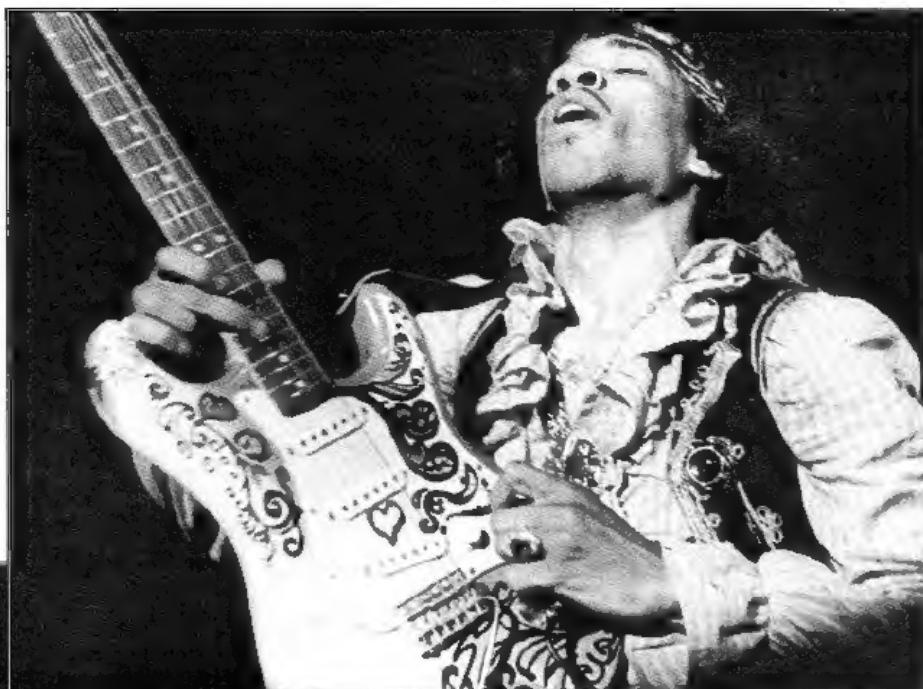
"You can't just bang a few pictures off. You have to listen to the music and figure out what their image is going to be."

— Bruce Fleming

covers were marvelous, but the influence really came from Blue Note [Records], who did some wonderful jazz record sleeves in the '50s. Instead of the usual schmaltzy picture, we would work with a designer and try something really new. Blue Note was wonderful — they were our standard really."

As well as photographing The Hollies, The Kinks, The Supremes, Lulu, and The Beatles at a fancy dress party, Fleming worked with many jazz greats.

"Chet Baker was a lovely guy. We were having a drink at the



All photos on this page © Bruce Fleming



he went into advertising and has won numerous awards for his campaigns. Currently he is working with a record company in creating images for some new artists.

"You can't just bang a few pictures off. You have to listen to the music and figure out what their image is going to be. You work with the make-up artists, the stylists and make sure they are wearing the right clothes. Only then do I press the button."

Following an exhibition in London, Fleming has been revisiting his work with Hendrix. "We are selling [the pictures] in limited editions of 50, all signed by me, and they are hand-printed and hand-framed. We are very careful about

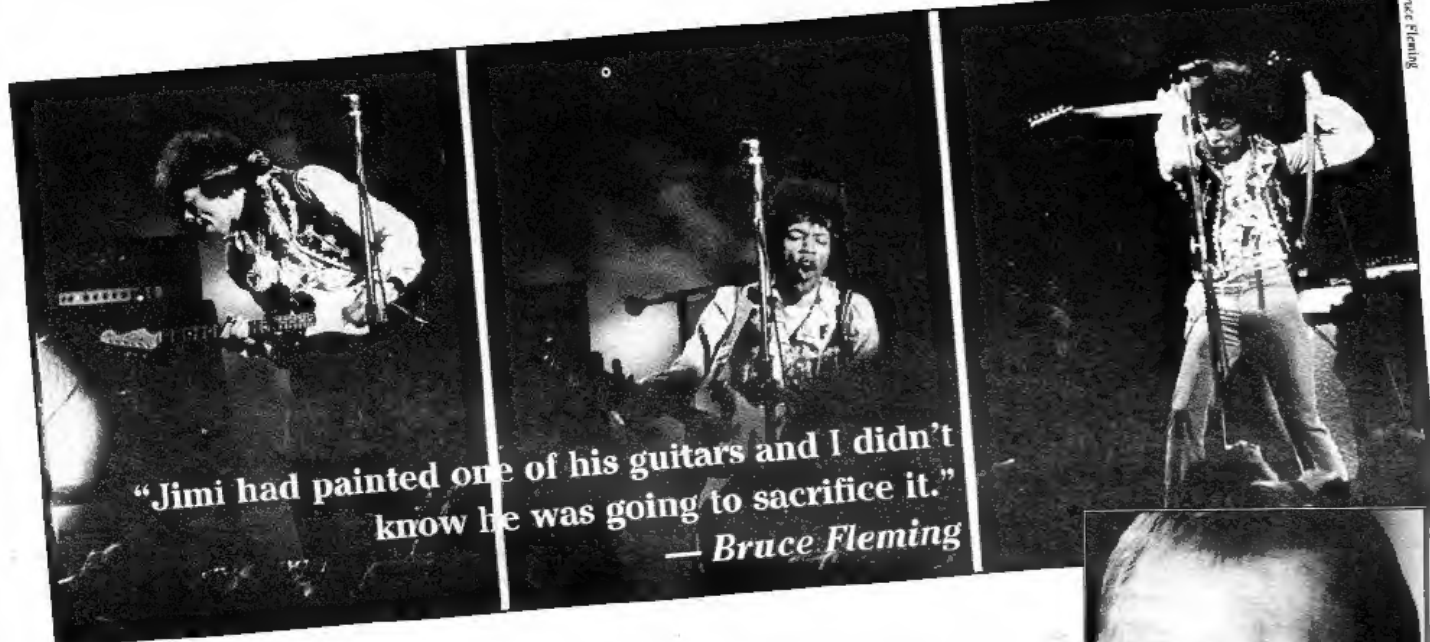
ber and he took his wraparound dark glasses off and went to talk to someone. I picked them up and looked through them and I couldn't see a thing. I couldn't understand how he could walk [through] Ronnie Scott's, which was a dark club anyway."

Fleming photographed the performers at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967. "It was a marvelous occasion, and I still believe in the hippie ideals of the Summer Of Love. I remember Otis Redding coming out in a silk suit and saying, 'You must be the love crowd,' and everyone was laughing at that. Jimi loved the whole thing, but he did have an argument with The Who as to who was going on first. They were both into art and destruction and so I knew that there would be some fireworks on stage, but I had no idea what Jimi had painted one of his guitars, and I didn't know he was going to sacrifice it.

"I was standing on a chair getting my pictures and we got to the climax of his set and I had to break off to rescue my wife who was being accosted by an over-amorous hippie, so I missed the shot of his guitar sacrifice."

When Fleming lost interest in the music in the late 1970s,





their archival quality, so we are working with [backing] board which won't destroy the picture. Providing you don't hang them in the sun, they should last for hundreds of years."

Using the latest technology, he has also created a stunning new picture. "It was commissioned by a record company and is called *The Last Experience*. We have taken a Hendrix picture from the '60s and digitally turned it into color and added a starlit background, so it looks like Jimi is playing in the stars. I pho-

tographed the Royal Albert Hall at night and then put them together with the star background. The record company loved it, and it is also available in a limited edition."

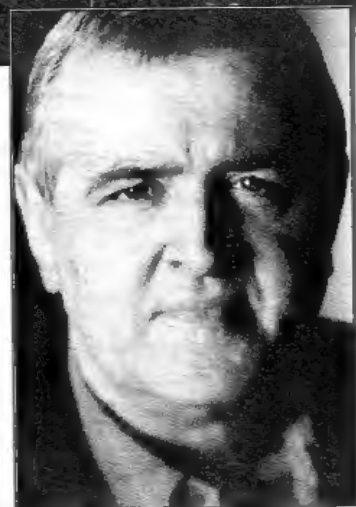
At an age (65) when most men would be retiring, Fleming is as active as ever, and we should be glad he is still here. In the 1960s, when London's East End gangsters, the Kray twins, wanted to improve their image with donations to charities, Fleming was asked to photograph them.

"I sent them some photos I had taken at a

charity football match, and because I didn't have a very wide-angle lens, I hadn't got Charlie [Kray] in. Ronnie said to me, 'Where's Charlie?' and that was a hairy moment. Everything was OK though, and Ronnie Kray put a £20 note into my top pocket as a bonus."

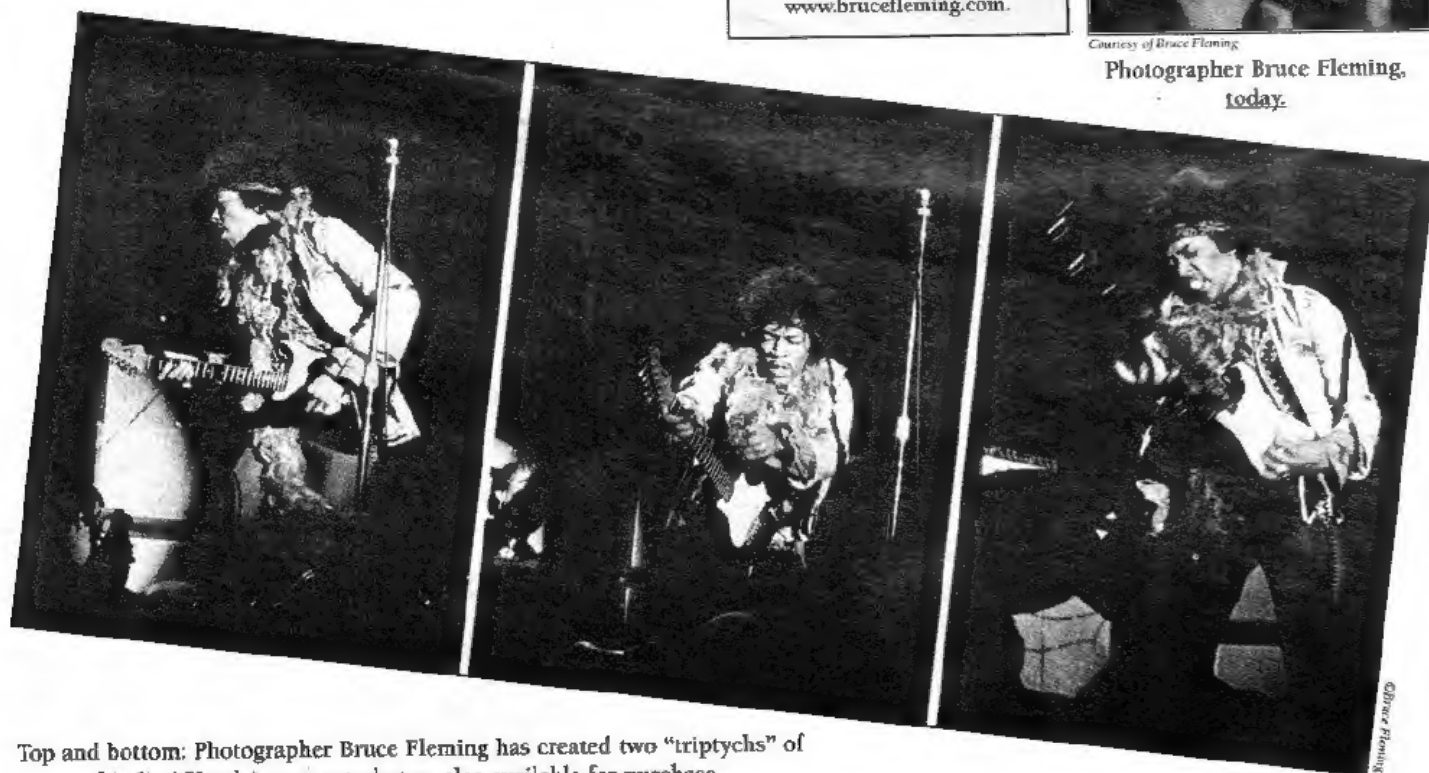
— Spencer Leigh

For information on purchasing copies of Bruce Fleming's Jimi Hendrix photographs, go to www.brucefleming.com.



Courtesy of Bruce Fleming

Photographer Bruce Fleming, today.



Top and bottom: Photographer Bruce Fleming has created two "triptychs" of his Jimi Hendrix concert photos, also available for purchase.